

II. REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending, claims 3, 5, 6, and 11-12 are allowed, and claims 24-43 are cancelled. The Applicant's attorney, Bryan Santarelli, has amended claims 1, 7-8, 13, 17, and 20-21 per a teleconference between Mr. Santarelli and the Examiner on 03 December 2003. In light of the following, all of the claims as amended are now in condition for allowance.

Rejection of Claims 1-2, and 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent 5,051,917 to Gould

Claim 1

Claim 1 as amended recites an integrated circuit including functional-circuit blocks each having a respective boundary that surrounds the block, a region disposed outside of the boundaries and devoid of functional-circuit blocks, and a transistor disposed in the region and having been placed in the region during the design of the integrated circuit after the functional-circuit blocks were placed.

For example, referring, to FIG. 1 of the patent application, an integrated circuit 10 includes functional circuit blocks 12 each having a respective boundary (the solid line that defines each block 12) that surrounds the block, a region (the portion of the region 14 located outside of the blocks 12) disposed outside of the boundaries and devoid of functional-circuit blocks, and an array 18 of one or more transistors disposed in the region. Referring to FIG. 9 and pages 8-9 of the patent application, during the design of the integrated circuit, the array 18 of transistors is placed in the region after the functional-circuit blocks 12 are placed. This allows one to put the transistors in a region that is not occupied by functional-circuit blocks. Of course the location of this region is not known until the locations of the functional-circuit blocks are known.

Conversely, referring, *e.g.*, to Gould's FIGS. 2 and 6, Gould does not disclose or suggest placing a transistor in a region devoid of functional-circuit blocks during the design of an integrated circuit after placing the functional-circuit blocks. Specifically, referring to Gould's FIG. 6, to insure that the transistor blocks 54 and 56 are contiguous to the cells 22 and 58, the blocks 54 and 56 must be placed at the same time as, and not after, the blocks 22 and 58 during design of the integrated circuit that incorporates these blocks.

Rejection of Claims 7-10 and 17-23 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of
Gould

Claim 7

Claim 7 as amended recites an integrated circuit including functional-circuit blocks each having a respective boundary that surrounds the block, a region located between and outside the boundaries of the functional-circuit blocks, devoid of functional-circuit blocks, and defined during the design of the integrated circuit after the locations of the functional-circuit blocks were defined, and a buffer disposed in the region.

Conversely, referring, e.g., to Gould's FIGS. 2 and 6, Gould does not disclose or suggest a region that is devoid of functional-circuit blocks and that is defined during the design of the integrated circuit after the locations of the functional-circuit blocks are defined.

Claim 8

Claim 8 as amended is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in support of the patentability of claim 7.

Claim 17

Claim 17 is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in support of the patentability of claim 7.

Claim 20

Claim 20 is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in support of the patentability of claim 7.

Claim 21

Claim 21 as amended is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in support of the patentability of claim 1.

**Rejection of Claims 13-16 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Gould and
U.S. Patent 6,414,518 to Patel**

Claim 13

Patel, like Gould, does not disclose or suggest a transistor disposed in a region between and outside the boundaries of functional-circuit block, where the transistor was designated for disposition in the region during the design of the integrated circuit after the functional-circuit blocks were designated for disposition in respective locations of the integrated circuit.

Therefore, claim 13 as amended is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in support of the patentability of claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3, 5, 6, and 11-12

These claims are allowed.

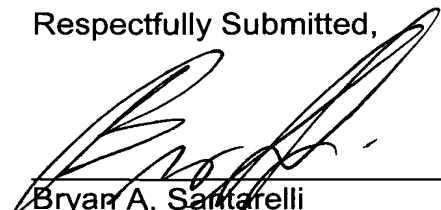
Conclusion

In light of the foregoing and in addition to allowed claims 3, 5, 6, and 11-12, claims 2, 4, 9-12, 14-16, 18-19, and 22-23 as previously pending and claims 1, 7-8, 13, 17, and 20-21 as amended are in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

In the event additional fees are due as a result of this amendment, you are hereby authorized to charge such payment to Deposit Account No. 50-1078.

DATED this 20th day of January, 2004.

Respectfully Submitted,



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